

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 5, 2003
Via Linda Senior Center
10400 E. Via Linda

Present: Chairperson Shelley Anderson, Vice-chair Leigh Hersey, Commissioners David Fortney, Bill Heckman, Nona Oliver and Stephen Owens

Absent and excused: Commissioner Lynn Timmons Edwards

Staff present: Scott Hamilton, Aaron Iverson, Steve Lehmann, Gary Meyer, Bill Murphy, Judy Weiss

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Anderson called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chairperson Anderson asked everyone to observe a moment of silence

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Heckman moved the minutes of the regular meeting of February 19, 2003 be approved as submitted. Commissioner Fortney seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF CURRENT EVENTS (A.R.S. § 38-431.02(K))

Judy Weiss, Parks, Recreation & Facilities Manager, updated the Commission on the status of events and activities of the Parks, Recreation, & Facilities Division. The next Commission meeting will be Wednesday, March 19, 2003 in the City Hall Kiva. This meeting may be canceled. The following meeting will be on Wednesday, April 2, 2003 in the HR Pinnacle Room and the approval of the DC Ranch South Master Plan will be on the agenda. The City Council will hear the McDowell Mountain Ranch Park/Aquatics Center issue on Monday, March 17, 2003 in the City Hall Kiva. The Desert Garden Grand Opening was held on Saturday, February 22nd. There were about 250 people who attended the event. Thanks to Mayor Manross, Council people Lukas, Ecton, Chairperson Anderson, Vice-Chair Hersey, Commissioners Heckman, and Oliver. McCormick Stillman Railroad Park held Exclusively Little on March 1st from 11am – 2pm and was attended by over 1,600 people. This was a fun event for children 3 to 8 years old. There were moonwalks, petting zoo, International Club performed, information booths on safety and health issues, game booths and arts & crafts. The event was moved to the plaza area due to the heavy rainfall the week before.

DRAFT STREETS MASTER PLAN REVIEW

Aaron Iverson, Public Works Planner, reviewed the Draft Streets Master Plan for the Commission, providing information and obtaining comments and input from the Commission. The Draft Streets Master Plan is the long-range street-planning tool for the city. The plan defines future street locations and improvements as well as setting goals and policies for circulation in Scottsdale. The Draft Streets Master Plan also replaces the circulation element of the city's old General Plan, outlines street classifications and standards, and provides guidelines for street plans. The complete Draft Streets Master Plan can be downloaded on-line at <http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Traffic/SMP>.

Chairperson Anderson called for public testimony.

Tony Nelssen, 7736 E. Redbird Rd., representing the Desert Foothills Property Owners Association, said he would like to commend staff in having the language including trails in this document. On North Scottsdale road there are parcels that will make it difficult to get trails easements from. He would like to recommend that there be a graphic that shows road cross-sections that include trails. Five years down the road it is nice to have a picture to look at. In the Desert Foothills area there were design guidelines established in 1998 and part of those were the offset road profile. That was to be implemented on all collector streets and road with less traffic volume.

Chairperson Anderson closed the public testimony.

Commissioner Heckman said he commends staff for moving this forward. He would like to see a map that identifies specifically the arterial streets including the ESLO areas that shows where we have intent to put our trails and make adequate provisions for those trails in addition to sidewalks and bicycle lanes. There are gaps in our ability to have these trails. He has visited the website and the trails provisions are on a small number of our roadways. He noted he likes the brochure and would recommend that an executive summary be provided and the entire document could be on the website for the entire document. This would save the city expenses in time and supplies in copying documents like these.

Chairperson Anderson asked if there has been discussions about dirt roads and additionally is there a plan to do regional maps for certain areas. Mr. Iverson said he could get with staff and the consultants on the mapping effort. With regard to the dirt roads, paving is based on volume. For the large amount of the City's dirt road the volume is small. There is no proposal to pave all the dirt roads. Chairperson Anderson asked if speed bumps are a part of this plan. Mr. Iverson said there is a neighborhood traffic program that deals with speed bumps and traffic calming issues.

REVIEW OF THE TEXT PORTION OF THE DRAFT TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Scott Hamilton, Trails Coordinator, and Jim Coffman of Todd and Associates, the consultant team, provided an overview of the text portion of the Draft Trails Master Plan for consideration of approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Information was provided regarding the location of trails southwest of the intersection of Scottsdale Road and Dynamite Boulevard.

Commissioner Heckman noted, with regard to the Scottsdale/Dynamite wash trail issue, he has received some phone calls on this segment. The understanding is that this parcel had the plat in place and it expired allowing it to be revisited and include the wash trail. The need is to plan these kinds of things before houses are built. This is one of those opportunities. All the trails in that area are on streets. He is excited about this inclusion.

Vice-chair Hersey asked about the directional signage, will that include traffic flow oriented. Mr. Coffman said they are just arrows directing flow.

Commission Owens asked about the Cactus Road replacement of the split rail fence, the amount of \$618,000 seems excessive. Mr. Coffman said it includes signal enhancements, a refuge area and resurfacing. Mr. Hamilton said it also include the replacement of the fence with something more substantial. Commissioner Heckman noted that he used to use that trail and does not anymore due to safety concerns. Would the City be better served to use these funds for other projects. Mr. Coffman said this issue came forward from the public. This is the only east/west link. Mr. Coffman said these are only recommendations and can be changed in priority. Commissioner Owens asked if the document is approved as is, does that approval extend to that item as it is listed. Mr. Coffman said the consultants were charged with giving the City a list of priorities and ways to spend the \$2.5 million. All the projects would have to come before the Commission and City Council. These are recommendations. Commissioner Heckman asked if the Council would be separately reviewing and approving the map and the text. Mr. Coffman said staff is bringing the entire document forward. Commissioner Oliver asked if each individual thing would be voted on separately. Mr. Hamilton said they would be asked to approve the entire document. The council can decide to act or not act on any part of it.

Chairperson Anderson said the prioritized items may cost less or more than the amount listed. The purpose of the plan is to approve the \$2.5 million to be expended. Mr. Coffman said the purpose is to give direction to the city. If the opportunity arose for a lower priority item to be implemented as a part of another project then the list can be re-evaluated. Mr. Hamilton said this plan will become a sub-plan to the general plan making it a long-term plan. This can be used to request funds in the future through budgeting and CIP dollars.

Chairperson Anderson called for public testimony.

Tony Nelssen, 7736 E. Redbird Rd. representing the Desert Foothills Property Owners' Association, noted that he spoke from the floor two weeks ago on the Scottsdale/Dynamite wash trail. There is the opportunity to provide the best possible recreation and experience for the residents of the community. There is no doubt that this wash provides the best possible experience for riding in this area. There are many dirt roads throughout the city. Some have been planned well and others not so well with regard to trails. This is an opportunity to get this in before homes are built. There were issues with the Jomax and Pinnacle Peak trails that have proven to be false. These have been successful projects. Another example is Whisper Rock as it has a very successful trail system.

Judith Wagman, 9730 E. Adobe Dr. representing the Pinnacle Peak Vistas and Heights Coalition, noted that the neighborhood is against the connectivity of the trail on Church Road. They are not against trails. This is not the feasible use for a citywide connection. The homes on Church Road were built before the people knew about the trails. They were not told through public hearings. They found out through 2 line notices and by word of mouth. They would like the Commission to reconsider this alignment. In the hurry to get this to City Council the Commission has not really studied this issue. The Cactus Road situation is no different from the Church Road alignment. It was mentioned that maintenance costs could be \$1,000 per mile. The residents of Church Road are not going to pay this. The Beardsley Wash is an alternative and please reconsider this.

Tom Rief, 4413 N. Saddlebag Trail, represents the owner of the property at southwest corner of Scottsdale and Dynamite Roads. The plat at Scottsdale/Dynamite received preliminary approval in 1991 with the trails easements along Scottsdale and Dynamite. The wash was never on the plan as a dedicated trail. The new Trails Master Plan does show the wash trail. The property is fenced and secured as it has been since the new owner took possession. The diagonal wash does not connect. With dedications on the north south and east side of the property any additional dedications would be excessive and unfair. He asks that the Commission to direct staff to remove the diagonal trail from the Master Plan. Commissioner Heckman noted that plat expired and is up for renewal. There has long been an interest in incorporating the trail into the system. This is not a new desire or piece of the puzzle. This wash is a perfect connection, cutting a half-mile off the journey from Pinnacle Vista up to Dynamite and then on to the Preserve. Mr. Rief said it took longer than expected to get through the approval process so the original plat expired. During that time the assumption was made that the original plan was still in place. That is no longer true. Two of the trails are in the scenic corridor. We are asking for reconsideration by the Commission. Chairperson Anderson said that things change and she can imagine what the developer is going through. Mr. Rief said that there could be legal issues but he cannot address those. There are differing opinions.

Jean Anderson, 29210 N. 64th Street, lives northwest of the property being discussed. She distributed a brochure to the Commission which was a study completed by the University of Arizona and the Arizona State Horseman's Association. Pleasure horses represent 78% of all horse owners. Equestrians live all over the area around Scottsdale/Dynamite. With regard to Church Road, there has to be a connection. Please consider all the alternatives for that plan.

Chairperson Anderson closed the public testimony.

Mr. Hamilton noted that staff is continuing to provide information to the City Council on alternatives to the Church Road alignment.

Vice-chair Hersey asked if the plan approved at the last commission meeting included the perimeter and wash trails. Mr. Hamilton said the plan the Commission approved was with the perimeter and the wash trail. That is what will be going to the DR Board.

Commissioner Heckman noted the fact is the trail through either of the 2 washes had been mapped for many years but it was not the City of Scottsdale. Trying to play catch up is more demanding and we are doing the best we can. When the Commission voted it stipulated that either of the washes would be a better alternative. But since there was no agreement from the residents on any of the alternatives, Church Road was selected because the easements are in place. This was not the wish but is the recommendation. The flow of traffic on Cactus is about 60,000 cars per day and he speculated that Church Road has fewer than 100 cars per day. These are not comparable. All we are approving is a plan. The specifics will come back for consideration. He commended staff on the work they have put into this plan.

Commissioner Heckman moved to approve the text portion of the Draft Trails Master Plan, including the wash trail location in the Saguaro Estates site at the southwest corner of Scottsdale Road and Dynamite Boulevard, as presented. Vice-chair Hersey seconded the motion.

Chairperson Anderson said she drove Church Road and it would be a dream come true if she could ride on that road rather than where she now rides. She agrees that it would never compare to Cactus Road.

Commissioner Oliver noted she also drove Church Road. Cars were passing her car and it was scary. She really believes that it is dangerous.

Chairperson Anderson called for the vote. The motion carried 5-1 (Commissioner Oliver opposed).

UPDATE ON THE YOUTH SPORTS FIELD MAINTENANCE TASK FORCE REPORT

Judy Weiss, Parks, Recreation & Facilities Manager, provided an update on the results of the Youth Sports Task Force meetings. The task force was developed in September 2002 to study the youth sports fields throughout the city and Scottsdale School District. The group met over the period of 3 months and discussed field maintenance and ways to improve the fields. The Youth Sports Task Force has produced a Draft Report. Staff will highlight the process and the recommendations and options contained in the report. The report was distributed to the commission at a previous meeting.

Commissioner Owens noted he came to this issue through contact with the Desert Foothills Little League and their Partnership Funding request. It seems it would be wise to use money with those groups that we partner with and it would be sad to lose that money. Other funding requests have been put on hold pending the outcome of this report. If we use these funds for maintenance we maybe may be sending a negative signal to those folks and discouraging if the process is too long. Ms. Weiss said it is not the intent to eliminate the Partnership Funds. We have approximately \$200,000 in funds and have asked groups that had applications to hold them in case the Council wanted to tap those funds for maintenance. There may be other means to raise funds and this would release those funds to the applicants. The final decision will be in June of this year when the budget is approved. To date those funds are usually used for Capital Projects types of improvements.

Commissioner Heckman noted it seems that a program similar to the Scottsdale Cares Utility Billing donation would be a good consideration here. This could bring in a significant amount of support from the community. Ms. Weiss said that the Scottsdale Cares funds are restricted in use. The recommendations are very specific to their purpose. Commissioner Oliver said they already have a dollar on the utility bill. Could we specify where the money would go. Ms. Weiss said the administrative work to get something on the utility bill is huge and time consuming.

Commissioner Fortney noted that he asked for a Lighting Update. Is this that update. Ms. Weiss said this is not that report. Commissioner Fortney asked how Supai was coming along and Indian School Park has bond money to pay for lighting improvements, is that true. Ms. Weiss said Supai is coming along. Indian School is a CIP project supported by bonds. Commissioner Fortney asked if that project would be coming before the Commission. Ms. Weiss said it would.

Chairperson Anderson opened public testimony.

Larry Heath, 8608 E. Gail Rd., said every year the little league announces they need volunteers to work on the fields. The environment is not safe for the children. The lack of funds the school district has to maintain the fields results in this unsafe condition. The right result is for the City to become involved. He wants a safe environment for the children to play. The report states that the City maintains fields at 7 locations that are all in north Scottsdale. There is no maintenance by the City on fields in the south Scottsdale area. The fields in north Scottsdale are immaculate. It is not right or fair. The recommendation should be included to take the money being spent on school fields and distribute them evenly between all the school fields. Then the entire city would be on an equal playing field.

Pedro Romeiro, 9035 N. 128th St., has been a resident of Scottsdale for 23 years and has children in various stages of school. He is very involved in sports and speaks for the Youth Soccer Association. The facilities are in poor condition. At any time there could be 20 teams on one field. He served on the Task Force. The plan may need some additional polishing but is a good start. He has passed along some ideas to staff. There are opportunities that the group will continue to explore. With regard to future facilities please take a look at these. We are behind on soccer facilities. Soccer and baseball cannot co-exist and overlaid fields don't work. There needs to be a more equitable distribution of facilities.

Victoria Thomas, 9035 N. 128th St., noted it is amazing when you see the fields at Chaparral and Mountain View. It is too dusty and not healthy for the children. Lighting the fields will help but those fields are already overused. What is being done to get new fields.

Chairperson Anderson closed the public testimony.

Ms. Weiss noted that staff agrees that we are under-fielded and under-lighted. The next soccer facility is the CAP Basin with 10 fields (4 lit).

Commissioner Heckman noted that all the schools mentioned are linked to parks and we partner where we can. The current stumbling block is that there are no city-dedicated parks adjacent to the schools in the south. Partnering saves money and provides the perfect combination. He feels that we have an obligation as a part of the Executive Summary to state what the findings are including the overall needs. If we are overusing the fields we are increasing the maintenance costs. We almost have to address the issue of expansion. Ms Weiss said that future facilities are contained in the report. We have too many participants on too few fields. We will have to get used to taking fields out of service.

Commissioner Fortney noted there are also a lot of schools that have fields being overused. He has discussed the fact that you can't go out and buy land to build a part. We have an opportunity if the school district will partner with the city to upgrade the maintenance. Hohokam is an example of land available but there is no inter-governmental agreement to cover its use. We don't have the partnering opportunities in the south. The groups can't do it all and neither can the city. There is land that can be used but the school district is going to have to kick in. There has to be give and take. You have to take advantage of the land that is there.

Commissioner Fortney moved to recommend to City Council acceptance of the report as written. Vice-chair Hersey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC (A.R.S. § 38-431.02)

Chairperson Anderson called for any items from the floor.

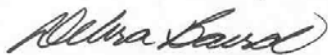
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heckman moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Fortney seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Meets established criteria.



Debra Baird, Director
Parks, Recreation, and Facilities